

South Gloucestershire Council

Policies, Sites & Places Plan Draft Town Centre Profiles

Bradley Stoke Town Centre Draft Profile Updated to June 2014

Please send any further suggestions for change to PlanningLDF@southglos.gov.uk

This is one of a series of draft town centre profiles which will be used to inform future planning policy. Initial comments were invited to arrive by 31st December 2013.

Comments on this profile were made by:

- Bradley Stoke Town Council – detailed comments suggesting changes to text and deletion of two residential areas from the town centre boundary.
- Colliers International for Spen Hill Management Ltd – who manage the Willow Brook Centre on behalf of joint venture owners. They seek provision for future retail growth.

Issues raised are addressed in detail at Appendix 1 to this profile.

Bradley Stoke Town Centre

1. Location

The main retail area of Bradley Stoke is the Willow Brook Centre located off Bradley Stoke Way and Savages Wood Road. It is broadly central to the town.

The Leisure Centre, Library and Secondary School are to the east and the Jubilee Centre (Bradley Stoke Town Council) to the west.

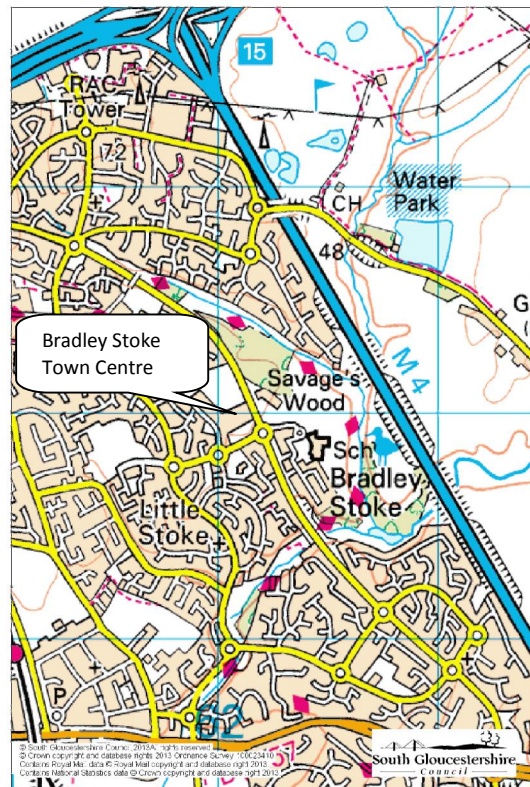
Bradley Stoke is also served by smaller mixed-use centres at the north end of Bradley Stoke way, Peartree Road, and Webbs Wood Road (Baileys Court).

2. Origin

The town centre area was first developed in the 1980s as part of the strategic plan for the new community of Bradley Stoke. Initially this comprised little more than a medium sized Tesco food store, a petrol station and the adjacent Three Brooks pub.

The Leisure Centre and Library were also developed in the 1990's.

Initially town centre development did not keep pace with the development of the wider town but from 2007 the Willow Brook Centre was developed and is anchored by a much larger Tesco store and a mix of retail and service units.



Bradley Stoke showing broad location of town centre

3. Character

The town centre and its facilities are modern and generally large in scale.

The Willow Brook Centre is dominated by the large format Tesco store and other large format stores supported by an extensive area of car parking.

Rather than having the feel of a mixed use town centre The Willow Brook Centre has a predominately retail character, although there are some smaller retail units, catering facilities, office uses, a commercial gym and a small 'town square'. The town square is a relatively low profile space within the main retail area.

The wider town centre area is not tightly defined but includes main distributor roads and the Leisure Centre to the east.

4. Strategies and Research

There is currently no overall strategy for the further development or promotion of the town centre although the centre management team is keen to develop a more rounded community focus.

5. Catchment Area and Competition

The Willow Brook Centre serves the town and a wider catchment area covering parts of Patchway, Little Stoke, Stoke Gifford and Winterbourne. Trade is also enhanced by proximity to the employment opportunities at Aztec West, Woodlands Lane and Vantage Park on the outskirts of the town which have either limited or no retail and community facilities close by.

As a modern retail centre, with a mix of large and small units, the town centre appears able to compete strongly with neighbouring centres and retains trade within the town.

Initially the retail centre had a primarily convenience offer dominated by Tesco but this has diversified to include large format comparison stores and a mixed range of smaller units.

While the town is not subject of significant further housing development the town centre is within short distance of planned development at the Cribbs/ Patchway and East of Harry Stoke New Neighbourhoods and that may increase expenditure potential. The centre has to compete with floorspace at Cribbs Causeway but generally has a different retail offer to that of the Mall.

6. Retail provision – From SGC Monitoring

“This centre serves the residential development of Bradley Stoke and provides a range of large and small retail units together with a complimentary range of services and facilities. The partly under cover centre incorporates an anchor store provided by a Tesco Extra supermarket which is supported by 17 other retail units. At the time of the survey 1 unit was vacant. The units were occupied by well known “high street” names including Carphone Warehouse, Pound World, Shoe Zone, Brantano, Pound Stretcher Extra, Argos and Greggs.”

(Source: SGC Town Centres and Retailing – Monitoring Report August 2013)

Retail Floorspace Summary

2013	Floorspace sq m	%	Units	%
Total Town Centre	17,448		18	
Convenience	11,560	66.3	2	11.1
Comparison	5,174	29.7	11	61.1

Service Uses	520	3.0	4	22.2
Vacant floorspace	194	1.1	1	5.6
Edge of Centre	0	0	0	0
Key – traders	Tesco, Boots, Argos, Brantano, Pets at Home			
Key community uses.	Leisure Centre and Library. Bradley Stoke Community School is located to the east and Bradley Stoke Town Council Office at the Jubilee Centre to the west. The post office is outside of the town centre at the Pavilions, Pear Tree Road.			
Markets	There is not currently a market – other than a bi-monthly farmers' market.			

7. Retail Frontages

The South Gloucestershire Local Plan 2006 does not define primary and secondary shopping frontages in Bradley Stoke. Suggested frontage designations are illustrated on the Bradley Stoke Town Centre Policy Diagram at the end of this profile.

8. Health check - Drawn from Roger Tym work (2008 -2010).

“3.24 The emergent town centre will provide a mix of uses in the convenience, comparison and food-services sectors although the large store format may not appeal to all consumers and some residents are ambivalent about the lack of traditional community functions such as a post office, police station and health centre etc. Bradley Stoke is defined as a Town Centre, based upon the volume of floorspace and because it is central to the new community. At the time of the survey the Tesco store and new retail units were still becoming established and so the full impact and potential of the centre may not be reflected in some of the survey findings.

3.25 The Town Centre manager is however keen to attract more public sector organisations into the town centre and the tenant mix will undoubtedly become more balanced over time.”

9. Non-retail uses

Bradley Stoke is predominantly a retail centre with limited non-retail floorspace compared with older centres of similar scale.

- **Commercial floorspace** – limited banks and building societies, property agents, relatively limited office floorspace.
- **Community Uses** – The Leisure Centre, Library, a primary and a secondary school are close to the centre. Meeting rooms are available at the Jubilee Centre – west of the town centre. There is limited youth provision. A skateboard facility is proposed for the Leisure Centre Site.
- **Service uses** – opticians and pharmacies within the Willow Brook Centre. The nearest post office is outside of the town centre at Bradley Pavilions, Pear Tree Road, BS32 0BQ.
- **Hotels and pubs and commercial leisure** – there is one central pub, cafe/restaurants and a commercial gym.
- **Residential uses** – the main retail area is closely bordered by residential development on all but its eastern side.

Community Activities within the Willow Brook Centre include:

- Charity Events (such as the ‘dogs show’), Fashion Show, Christmas lights switch on, Churches – Carol Concert

The town square is already used to provide a number of events comprising:

- Bi-monthly farmers market, Children's rides (area of 1,000 sq ft), Promotions (averages about 10 a year), Summer activities (which in 2014 will include a beach).

The centre also accommodates a series of community based events and initiatives comprising:

- Monthly local councillor surgery, Let's recycle awareness campaign, Local Plan briefing and general awareness campaigns run by the local authority and other organisations.

10. Evening Economy

The evening economy is limited to the Leisure Centre, pub and retail facilities. The town is in reasonable proximity to the Venue at Cribbs Causeway which may limit scope for the town to develop its own cinemas, cultural and leisure facilities.

11. Governance

The Willow Brook Centre is owned as a joint venture fund between Tesco and BP. It has active on site management. Single management is helpful in planning and delivery of any expansion of floorspace and also in ongoing promotion and enhancement of the centre.

There is an active Town Council.

There is a local business forum but that is not focused on town centre issues.

(<http://bradleystokesmallbusinessforum.ning.com/>)

"Bradley Stoke Small Business Forum provides small businesses in the Bradley Stoke and surrounding areas with a platform to discuss common problems and solutions associated with day to day issues that affect those running their own small businesses or enterprises. Our overall aim is to help create prosperity for its members by providing business and networking opportunities both locally and nationally. In this way we hope to raise awareness of the advantages of Bradley Stoke as a place to work and reside, and to improve the economic structure of the town. We welcome membership from both new and established businesses from all sectors, holding monthly network meetings to enable members to share services, skills and knowledge areas. Within our website you will also find contact details and web links to local businesses, offering a range of services."

12. Safety and Security

The Willow Brook Centre has active management of CCTV systems.

13. Accessibility issues

Pedestrian and cycle routes into the Centre from residential areas are hampered by some major roads crossings. The layout of the town as a whole has been criticised as being more car than pedestrian/cycle friendly.

There is a small pedestrianised town square.

Public Transport - bus services penetrate the town centre via a bus gate. Public transport should improve further with the proposed Bus Rapid Transit system which will use Bradley Stoke Way.

Parking – there is generous provision of free parking – time limited to 4.5 hours. The main retail area appears car dominated.

Mobility issues - The internal circulation of the retail centre is accessible but links to the wider town are problematic with crossing of major roads.

14. Environmental Quality

Heritage – The Willow Brook Centre and Leisure Centre complex function well but are

of little heritage interest in what is effectively a new town centre.

Environment – While the town centre is generally well maintained it is lacking in green spaces. There is a network of green spaces in the wider town.

15. Tourism

The Town Centre has limited facilities or interest for tourists but has some potential for business tourism linked to surrounding commercial areas. Preliminary proposals for a hotel were dropped in favour of the McCarthy and Stone older persons housing scheme at the corner of Savages Wood Road and Bradley Stoke Way.

16. Health Check Summary

Health Check Tests	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversity of uses 	<p>The town centre has retail, community and commercial leisure uses but there is scope for further diversification and perhaps development of the evening economy. There may be scope to increase comparison floorspace which is under represented at present.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of vacant street level property 	<p>No vacancies. Assumed to be trading well.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial Yields on non-domestic property 	<p>No data available</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers' views and behaviour 	<p>Assumed general satisfaction with the functional aspects of the centre but this needs to be tested. The Bradley Stoke Journal (January 2014) reports the following feedback from a local survey.</p> <p>What type of stores would you like to see opening in Bradley Stoke town centre (The Willow Brook Centre)? [choose up to three]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bank (31%, 133 Votes) Bookshop (11%, 48 Votes) Butcher (30%, 130 Votes) Clothing store (38%, 164 Votes) Fishmonger (9%, 38 Votes) Gift shop (10%, 44 Votes) Greengrocer (24%, 103 Votes) Homeware/DIY store (24%, 106 Votes) Post office (57%, 245 Votes) Sportswear store (17%, 73 Votes) <p>Total Voters: 433</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retailer representation and intentions to change representation 	<p>There is a very high proportion of national retailers and a limited independent sector.</p> <p>The Council currently has no information on companies seeking space within the town.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial rents 	<p>No data available</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pedestrian flows 	<p>No data available – but assumed to be high and vibrant.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessibility 	<p>Bradley Stoke has the appearance of a car based town centre although there is a large resident population within walking distance.</p>

	<p>Bus services penetrate the Willow Brook Centre via a bus gate.</p> <p>The proposed Bus Rapid Transit system will use Bradley Stoke Way and should help to reinforce bus patronage to the centre.</p> <p>The Willow Brook Centre retail area is largely pedestrianised with good mobility but links to residential areas are more problematic.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception of safety and occurrence of crime 	No major issues noted raised in response to consultation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State of town centre environmental quality 	The retail centre is under active single management (provided by joint owners) and appears generally well maintained.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health issues 	GP services are generally located outside of the town centre. As a largely car based centre it probably does not contribute greatly to healthy living although there is both a Leisure Centre (with swimming pool) and a private gym.
<p>17. Key Messages from Roger Tym Study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bradley Stoke is dominated by a large Tesco store but does offer other services and facilities consistent with a town centre designation. • In the period to 2026 there is no requirement for additional convenience floorspace. • In the period to 2026 there will be some need for comparison floorspace. 	
<p>18. Consultation and Feedback</p> <p>This profile was published in draft in December 2013. In preparing a revised profile account has been taken of feedback from that initial consultation and from a questionnaire sent to town and parish councils on more general planning policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bradley Stoke Town Council – detailed comments suggesting changes to text and deletion of two residential areas from the town centre boundary. • Colliers International for Spen Hill Management Ltd – who manage the Willow Brook Centre on behalf of joint venture owners. They seek provision for future retail growth. <p>Detailed responses are reproduced at Appendix 1.</p>	
<p>19. Policy: Role and Function</p> <p>Core Strategy Policy CS14 identifies Bradley Stoke as a ‘town centre’. The overall aim is for mixed use vibrant town centres. Policy is to direct new retail floorspace and other town centre uses into town centres where sites are available. A town centre first approach therefore requires consideration of scope to expand Bradley Stoke (and other town centres) before out of centre development.</p>	
<p>20. Suggested Vision</p> <p>Bradley Stoke town centre will consolidate, grow and diversify to meet the changing needs of the town.</p>	
<p>21. Land use issues and opportunities</p>	
Strategy	There is currently no detailed policy or strategy for the town centre.

	<p>There are few, if any, available sites for retail development outside of the Willow Brook Centre. The aim is to focus any future retail development in or adjacent to the primary retail area.</p> <p>The Council and principal landowners recognise that there is both expenditure and physical capacity to accommodate growth at Bradley Stoke.</p> <p>It is proposed to define a town centre boundary which includes the Leisure Centre and to also define a primary retail area and a preferred area to accommodate future retail growth. Primary and secondary retail frontages are also proposed.</p>
Development needs/ sites:	Intensification of retail floorspace within the Willow Brook Centre is likely to require either redevelopment or extension over the existing car parks or provision of a decked car park to retain parking capacity.
Retail growth	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Convenience floorspace – no commitments post 2011 and assumed limited potential given the dominance of the large format Tesco store. The Centre might benefit from more internal competition but that could prove difficult to secure. Comparison floorspace – Committed post 2011 - 743 sq.m Mezzanine floor at Unit 3 Willow Brook Centre - (PT11/2490/F approved September 2011) <p>Further Potential</p> <p>The joint landowners have suggested extension of the proposed primary retail area boundary to accommodate new stores as an extension to the existing row of large format stores. They also suggest a small parade in the north-west corner of the site. (See representations at Appendix 1).</p> <p>While these options will need to be examined in detail the working assumption is of scope for around 5,000 sq. m of comparison growth with a suggested site for retail expansion shown, for illustrative purposes, north of the existing large format units.</p>
Markets	There is not a market at present other than the bi-monthly farmers market. There are small kiosk stores within the Tesco Foyer. There are no specific proposals for a new market although a fruit and veg stall has operated since June 2014.
Public Realm/ Sense of place	The public realm is well maintained but of limited visual interest and variety.
Public Transport	Buses penetrate the Willow Brook centre at present. With introduction of MetroBus (a Bus Rapid Transit System) the town centre may become a more effective interchange for public transport services. It may also result in pressure on car parks to be used as informal park and ride – while parking is currently free it is time-limited.
Walking, Cycling routes	Although accessible by foot and cycle routes into the centre are generally indirect and could be improved visually.
Mobility	No specific proposals for improvement are highlighted at this stage.
Parking	Parking is privately managed by the shopping centre. It is adequate in quantity, free and time limited. It is difficult to expand the centre without losing some parking space.

Traffic management	No specific proposals for improvement are highlighted at this stage.
Centre Management	No specific proposals for change are highlighted at this stage.
Promotion	<p>Web sites publicise events in the town and town centre.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bradley Stoke Town Council (http://www.bradleystoke.gov.uk/) • Willowbrook Centre (http://www.willowbrookcentre.co.uk/information/) • Bradley Stoke Journal (http://www.bradleystokejournal.co.uk/) <p>More could be done to develop a rounded community atmosphere for the Centre but no specific actions have been suggested through consultation on this profile.</p>
Visitors/Tourism	Bradley Stoke is unlikely to develop as a tourist destination
Evening economy	No specific proposals for change are highlighted at this stage.
Community	No specific proposals for change are highlighted at this stage.

22. Bradley Stoke Town Centre Summary

Bradley Stoke is a modern town centre with generally large format retail stores within the Willow Brook Centre and relatively limited community and service functions. Core Strategy Policy CS14 aims to consolidate Bradley Stoke town centre.

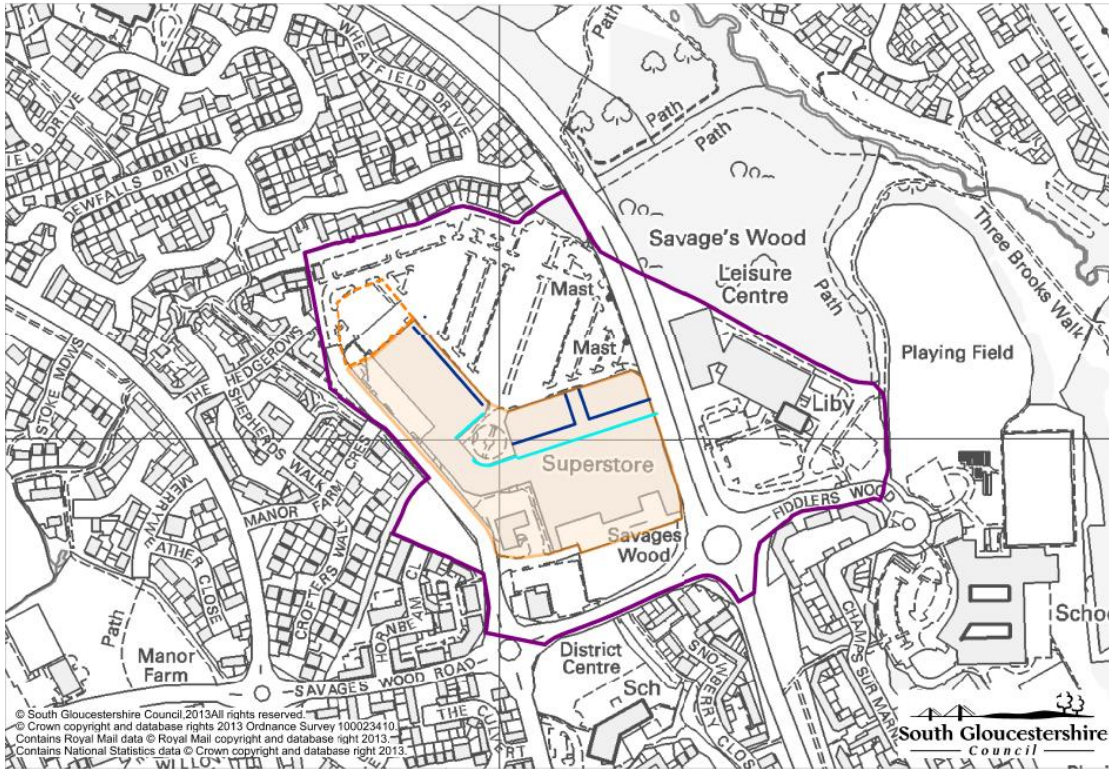
The proposed town centre boundary includes a defined primary retail area, based on the existing shops, and a wider area including the Leisure Centre and principal car parks. It also includes the pub, garage and retirement homes fronting Savages Wood Road.

It is proposed to allow for an extension to the primary retail area to north of the existing large format retail units. This might accommodate in the order of 5,000 sq m of comparison floorspace. The growth allocation is proposed in recognition of Bradley Stoke as a major town centre, likely physical and retail capacity and the overall need to make provision for comparison floorspace within the District.

Primary and secondary retail frontages have not previously been defined for Bradley Stoke. Proposed frontage designations are now shown in support of Policy PSP 29.

There is a range of promotional and management actions which can also be considered to enhance the vitality of the centre. More detail is set out in the town centre profile.

Bradley Stoke Town Centre Proposed Policy Diagram



Legend


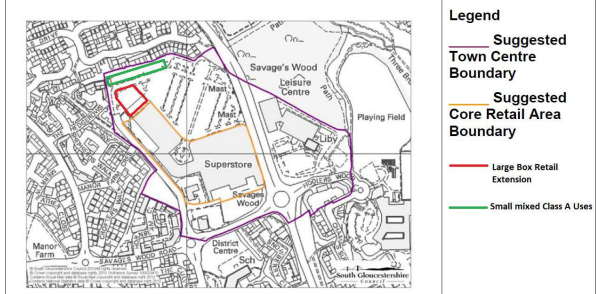
	Proposed Town Centre Boundary
	Proposed Primary Retail Area
	Proposed Primary Retail Frontage
	Proposed Secondary Retail Frontage
	Proposed Primary Retail Area Extension

Appendix 1 – Bradley Stoke Town Centre - feedback from consultation

a) Town and Parish Council Questionnaire feedback

Q3. Please list any land use/building projects that your local community consider would benefit their area and where known your preferred location. Responses relevant to the Town Centre.		
Response from	Project/Proposal	Preferred Location (if known)
Bradley Stoke TC	1. New Skate Park	Land at Bradley Stoke Leisure Centre is in the process of being allocated
Bradley Stoke TC	2. New Health Centre	
Bradley Stoke TC	3. Cinema/Theatre	
Bradley Stoke TC	4. Youth Facilities	
Bradley Stoke TC	5. Sports/Leisure Facilities	
Bradley Stoke TC	6. Recreational/Public Park Facilities	
Bradley Stoke TC	7. BMX/Mountain Bike Track	
<p>Q4</p> <p>(a). Please indicate any significant issues/problems your community feel are present in the town centres that they most frequently use.</p> <p>For example do the community have good access to shops, banks, cultural and community facilities etc?</p> <p>(b) Please also indicate if there are positive aspects of particular town centres that the community value.</p> <p>Feedback is summarised below:</p>		
Comment by	Issue/Problem with Centre	Positive Aspects of Centre
Bradley Stoke TC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a need for a Crown Post Office to be situated in the centre of the town – this has been identified as a need by a Public Consultation exercise carried out by Bradley Stoke Town Council in 2011 and more recently by an online poll carried out by a local media source. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free parking (time limited to 4.5 hours) Good public transport links.
Iron Acton PC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Transport links are poor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free parking

b. Feedback on the draft profile

i) Bradley Stoke Town Council	Suggested Change
Offered detailed comments on text	All addressed as editorial changes in the revised profile
<p>Requests removal of McCarthy and Stone Retirement flats and flats and houses in Champs Sur Marne – both at southern end of site Centre.</p> 	<p>While housing in Bradley Stoke is all outside of the Primary Retail area some residential buildings help to form the setting of the wider town centre.</p> <p>The proposed town centre boundary has been amended to remove properties at Champs Sur Marne but the McCarthy and Stone apartments are considered to form part of the character of the town centre as a whole and remain within the proposed boundary.</p>
ii) Colliers International - For Spen Hill Management Ltd	
Confirm intention to continue to improve the centre through the development of new retail and other floor space, both to expand the offer and introduce a greater mix.	Noted
Confirm that the extent of the town centre, as identified in Section 23 of the draft brief is considered acceptable but the suggested core retail area is too tightly defined and should be extended to encompass land for new development for main town centre uses.	Agreed in principle
Visions and actions for the centre should be amended to include a positive commitment to meet the identified need for additional quantitative floor space within the existing retail area of the Bradley Stoke town centre.	Agreed – text amended.
<p>Plan provided shows the suggested area for the extension of the core retail area or for site allocations for new development to provide for around 5,000 sq m of growth in two areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extension to main retail area • A range of smaller units against the northern boundary to allow for a more neighbourhood orientated phase of development. That could include a range of retail and service uses, including modern uses which respond to the development of the internet, such as Amazon lock-up or click and collect. 	<p>Agreed - show potential expansion of the main retail area as a dotted line i.e. subject to detailed investigation/planning approval.</p> <p>While the principle of providing for a range of smaller units is considered acceptable the location shown may prove problematic in being close to residential properties and not being well integrated with the core retail area.</p>
	

<p>Whilst at present no primary or secondary shopping frontages have been defined, it would be appropriate for the entire frontage of the scheme to be identified as primary shopping frontage which would reflect the equal importance of different parts of the centre to the overall town centre function.</p>	<p>Not agreed – Bradley Stoke is unusual in that much of the potential primary retail frontage is internalised within an enclosed area. For this reason it is hard to follow principles set for more traditional centres.</p> <p>It is proposed to show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the large format comparison units as primary frontage • the smaller units within the covered area as primary frontage. • The Tesco store as a single span secondary frontage • The units fronting the town square which are primarily not in A1 use as secondary frontage. <p>The position can be reviewed in response to any further feedback.</p>
<p>iii) New Communities Officer</p>	
<p>Consider whether the secondary school (Bradley Stoke Community School) forms part of the town centre through provision for community activities etc.</p>	<p>While the secondary school off Fiddlers Wood Lane is reasonably close to the main retail and service areas it does not appear to have any visual links with it. There may be functional links in terms of linked trips but these are not so strong as to suggest inclusion within the town centre boundary.</p> <p>Similarly while the playing field at Meadowbank Primary School is visible on routes to the town centre it does not form a functional part of it and is not shown within the policy area.</p>